(b) to (d) Due to large scale import of palm oil (CPO and RBD Palmolein) from Malaysia and other countries, the coconut farmers in the country including the State of Kerala have been adversely affected on account of decline in the prices of copra and other oilseeds in the domestic market. However, in order to protect the interest of oilseeds and coconut growers in the country, the Government is implementing Minimum Support Price (MSP) Scheme and National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation (NAFED), which is the Central nodal agency for procurement of oilseeds including copra, enters into Market Support Operation as and when the prices fall below MSP. The NAFED has procured large quantities of copra under price support operation in order to help the coconut growers in the country including the State of Kerala. Besides this, Government has also increased the import duty on different categories of edible oils including palm oils *w.e.f.* 1st March, 2001 in order to protect the interest of oilseeds and coconut growers in the country.

Assistance for low rainfall in Karnataka

3524. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN:
PROF. A. LAKSHMISAGAR:
SHRI H. K. JAVARE GOWDA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have conducted any survey of monsoon rains in the country;

(b) if so, which States are receiving low rainfall;

(c) whether Karnataka has been included in the list; and

(d) if so, whether any special assistance would be given to Karnataka?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI AJIT SINGH): (a) to (c) The rainfall in the country is regularly monitored by the India Meteorological Department (IMD), which includes monitoring of rainfall during monsoon season. The monsoon season, according to IMD, spans from 1st June to 30th September. For this purpose whole country has been divided in 35 meteorological sub-divisions. So far (from 1.6.2001 to 15.8.2001), the monsoon rains had been deficient (-20% to -59% of long period average) in 7 met. sub-divisions namely Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya, sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Rayalseema in Andhra Pradesh, North Interior Karnataka and South Interior Karnataka.

(d) Part of Karnataka received less rainfall during current South-West monsoon period resulting in drought like situation. In response to the Memorandum submitted by the State Government seeking Central assistance in the wake of drought, an Inter-ministerial Central Team visited the affected areas from 31st July to 3rd August, 2001 for assessment of the situation. Entire Central share of Calamity Relief Fund for 2001-2002 amounting to Rs. 58.72 crore has been released to the State.

Facilities to food processing sector in A.P.

3525. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have extended loan and other facilities to food processing sector in Andhra Pradesh, so as to enable the sector to manufacture higher value-added products, with lesser investment; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TH. CHAOBA SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Financial assistance of around Rs. 674.00 lakhs was provided to different projects received from Andhra Pradesh for the development of food processing industries during the Ninth Plan period.

Demand for bio-fertilizers

†3526. SHRI GOPALSINH G. SOLANKI:
SHRI ANANTRAY DEVSHAKER DAVE:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether bio-fertilizers in the country are more in demand in the agricultural sector, than the chemical fertilizers;

(b) whether the present fertilizer producing units are unable to meet the demand for bio-fertilizers;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) what steps have been taken to ensure easy supply of fertilizers to farmers at low price?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.